

White Paper on Strategies and Structures for Education in Victorian Government Schools

VICTORIA

**WHITE PAPER ON STRATEGIES AND
STRUCTURES FOR EDUCATION IN
VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This paper is a statement of Government policy with regard to new administrative arrangements for government schools in Victoria. Its purpose is to set out management and organisational structures necessary to achieve already established aims and objectives for education. The Paper is a result of a lengthy and extensive consultative process, involving large numbers of parents, teachers, principals, departmental officers, representatives of interest groups and members of the Victorian community.
- 1.2 Shortly after their appointment in May 1979, the Minister and Assistant Minister of Education announced a review of education policies designed to identify clearly the aims and objectives of education in Victoria and to determine the strategies, structures, policies, and administrative changes that would best assist achieving those aims and objectives.
- 1.3 By an advertisement dated 24 August 1979, all schools, interested organisations and members of the public were invited to make submissions. A detailed supporting statement on the purpose of the review was circulated to schools. Officers of the Education Department prepared an Education Department point of view and a Consultative Committee of educators and interested lay people was formed to provide an independent perspective and to analyse submissions from the public.
- 1.4 The first stage of the review culminated in the presentation to Parliament on 12 December 1979 of a Ministerial Statement on the 'Aims and Objectives of Education in Victoria'. This statement provides a set of goals towards which schools and the education system can work.

- 1.5 Because of their central importance for this Paper, the aims and objectives set out in the Ministerial Statement of 12 December 1979 are reproduced below:

THE AIM OF EDUCATION IN VICTORIA

The central aim of education in Victoria is to provide educational experiences of the best possible quality, for children, youth, and adults. Through these experiences they will have the fullest opportunity to:

reach an understanding of themselves and society (educational opportunity);

develop to their highest level of intellectual, emotional, and social competence (educational achievement);

achieve socially responsible self-direction (education and values); and

build an abiding sense of community throughout our society (education and community).

THE OBJECTIVES OF EDUCATION IN VICTORIA

From the central aim of education spelt out above, it is possible to set both broad and specific objectives. The broad objectives are:

to recognize and accept both the diversity of our community and the widely agreed values and structures within it;

to develop in each individual the intellectual, practical, social and emotional skills required to understand our society and to live, work and function effectively within it;

to develop a more co-operative, caring, and democratic community concerned with the welfare and optimum growth of all its members; and

to encourage increased community participation in consideration of educational issues, educational decision-making, and the life of schools.

The attainment of these broad objectives within the framework of available funds will call for sensitivity and flexibility in educational administration, for high quality in teaching, and for understanding and support from the community as a whole.

to provide freedom of choice of schools to all parents wherever practicable by encouraging diversity in school programmes and by encouraging review of present curriculum offerings to ensure that there is real choice and not just confusion brought about by too many alternatives being available.

4. Education and community. The objectives are:

to provide the opportunity for students to learn to exercise autonomy and responsibility through their school experience;

to provide educational experiences that will contribute to the preparation of students for life within a wider community, including family life and working life;

to ensure that the aims of education are pursued in all schools through the development of a core curriculum for students generally, with provision for individual schools to pursue locally based components to balance the school programme;

to foster co-operation between schools and the community in the matter of school governance; and

to decentralize the administration of education wherever appropriate to allow local communities as far as is possible to share the responsibility and accountability for local educational policy and for decision-making in local schools.

- 1.6 In the light of the 'Aims and Objectives' statement, the Consultative Committee considered further submissions and produced recommendations on the strategies and structures to be adopted in order to achieve the aims and objectives. The Director-General's Office and his Policy Committee also considered the implications of a wide range of options, and analysed responses to a document produced for this purpose. These efforts contributed to the production of a 'Green Paper on Strategies and Structures for Education in Victoria', which was tabled in Parliament on 8 May 1980.

- 1.7 The Green Paper emphasised the theme of devolution of responsibility, but made it clear that no firm decisions had been made and that the Government was not committed to any particular course of action. The paper sought to provide a basis for discussion and options for consideration. It emphasised that its main purpose was:

... to provide a positive starting point from which organisations and individuals interested in the future of education in this State can develop views and practical ideas designed to assist the Government in framing and implementing policies best equipped to achieve the aims and objectives of education.

- 1.8 Following publication of the Green Paper, the Ministers set up mechanisms to facilitate consultation and to secure reaction and comment. Copies were immediately circulated to schools and community groups, and responses were invited by 30 September 1980. By the closing date, over 600 submissions had been received from teachers, principals, parents, schools, school councils, teacher organisations, other interest groups, tertiary education institutions and others. Late submissions were accepted, taking the total to 935. Nineteen key interest groups in the education field were invited to join an Organisations Reference Group to consider the concepts presented in the Green Paper, to make known to the Ministers the views and relevant policies of the organisations represented, and to explore areas of likely consensus.. Sixteen invitees accepted and the Group considered in detail and reported unanimously on issues relating to devolution, curriculum, finance, personnel, buildings, and services to support devolution. A survey of community expectations towards primary and secondary education was conducted. Questionnaires were distributed in July 1980 by mail to a random sample of 2000 persons, drawn from the State Electoral Roll, and responses were analysed. Regional directors were commissioned to undertake a 'follow-up' process of conducting discussions, eliciting responses on key issues from individual schools and bringing results together in summary form.

Their reports incorporated the results of more than 3600 written responses, in addition to the oral contributions made at meetings. Senior officers of the Education Department and its divisions also presented submissions. Despite these provisions, some individuals and organisations felt that the time available to make detailed and considered contributions was insufficient.

- 1.9 All submissions were methodically analysed, and the Ministers considered the many suggestions, comments and proposals made in the light of the Ministerial statement on 'Aims and Objectives'. As a result of the consultative process, the decisions outlined and the arguments presented in this Paper differ appreciably from the proposals and discussion set out in the Green Paper. In general, the Government has accepted the proposition made in many submissions that opportunity for further consultation should be given with respect to important educational issues, whilst concluding at the same time that administrative and organisational reform to increase efficiency and economy are urgent.
- 1.10 Although the Government's long-term objective is to consider every aspect of education in Victoria, the range of submissions received was largely confined to the Government school system and time constraints precluded consideration of other educational institutions. Consequently, matters relating to registered schools and tertiary and post-secondary institutions have been reserved for future consideration. Currently the administration of technical and further education (TAFE) is under review by the Technical and Further Education Board which will make recommendations to the Ministers.

2.0 PERSPECTIVE

- 2.1 When Victorians established a system of free, compulsory, and secular education in 1872, they demonstrated the value they placed on public education. Their intention was not only to raise the level of general literacy, but to provide equality of opportunity for all to benefit from education, to facilitate the development of a more prosperous society, and to produce a people committed to the concept of a liberal democracy in which citizens would play an intelligent and informed part in influencing their own destinies.
- 2.2 When viewed overall, the aims of the founders of the Victorian public education system have been achieved to a remarkable degree. By any standard, the Victorian population of 1980 is infinitely better educated and better informed than it was in 1872. The education system has grown and become much more complex, and over the years it has contributed significantly both to the personal development of its citizens and to the social and economic development of society. With a much higher standard of general education today, it is not surprising that citizens are still vitally interested in their education system. But more important, many citizens feel qualified to demand a greater say upon matters which affect the educational destiny of the children of Victoria. Above all else, the submissions received by the Ministers demonstrate a high degree of community interest in schools, and a strong desire by many individuals, associations and community groups to contribute to policy development for the education system.
- 2.3 It is not always appreciated how significantly the public education system has changed over the past century. In 1872 following passage of the Education Act, less than 136,000 pupils were enrolled in government schools; now enrolments exceed 614,000 pupils. In 1872 there was a single university with an enrolment of a mere

250 students; now the State has four universities, with a total enrolment of almost 44,000 students. A century ago technical education, teacher education and non-university technological education were in their infancy; now Victoria has a well-developed advanced education system with total enrolments of almost 55,000 students, while there are over 240,000 enrolments in technical and further education. Facilities and advisory services have improved markedly; today Victorians can be justly proud of their fine school, TAFE and tertiary education facilities, of the wide range of educational programmes available, and of the range of services provided to assist schools and pupils.

2.4 As the education system expanded and became increasingly complex, so administrative arrangements were modified. In the early years of the century, for example, the divisional structure of the Education Department was developed in order to meet the needs of expanding state secondary and technical schools. During the 1970s substantial administrative changes were introduced. Within the Education Department, functional co-ordination was introduced in the Office of the Director-General and five service directorates were established to provide more efficient management and improved services to schools. In response to criticisms of the high level of administrative centralization in the Department, regional administrative units were set up, and in 1975 provision was made for school councils with greater powers. Increased professional responsibility was delegated to schools and teachers, especially with regard to curriculum. It should be noted that in a number of areas Victoria has led most other Australian states and territories in providing for increased decentralisation of authority; the councils of technical schools, for instance, have long had important powers of co-ordination and allocation of resources.

2.5 Many of these administrative changes occurred gradually, and were the product of evolutionary development. There are strong

arguments in favour of gradual and evolutionary changes in administrative arrangements in order that the education system might respond efficiently to new demands, new pressures and new ideas. At the same time, many reforms will never be achieved without firm Government initiative and action. Moreover, a process of consultation and consensus however desirable on questions of objectives will seldom produce positive action for administrative reform. The consolidation of past developments in a rational way and the stripping of unnecessary structures, even if hallowed by time, can only be achieved by Government decision. In the current context it is clear that Government initiative is essential to achieve greater managerial efficiency and a more flexible, open and responsive education system.

- 2.6 There is a general belief, however unrealistic, that increased funding will solve every problem. There is insufficient recognition that resources are, and will always be, limited. The Government must also provide from those limited funds for many services beside education. The funds allocated for education itself must be sensitively and equitably deployed between its many differing types of schools and educational institutions. If the needs of any individual school are looked at in isolation and without regard to the requirements and constraints of the system as a whole, those associated with that school may well believe that their needs are inadequately met. Those needs, however, must be viewed in the context of the whole.
- 2.7 The challenge faced today is to provide for the development of an education system which is at once sensitive to the needs of children, parents, teachers, and Victorian society at large, while recognising the need to provide for diversity, individuality, and difference. Furthermore, there is a clear responsibility to build on what is best in that which has gone before.

3.0 KEY THEMES

3.1 The majority of submissions were properly concerned with educational issues rather than administrative issues. In so far as administration was considered, submissions tended to deal with inadequacies of existing arrangements and to propose re-adjustments and modifications rather than major restructuring - nor could they fairly have been expected to do so. They also favoured, where possible, gradual and evolutionary change, with a maximum degree of consultation with key participants. The Government endorses this approach, but accepts responsibility for initiating structural alterations which will facilitate change continuing to take place. Through overhaul of administrative structures, the aim is to enable the education system to serve the interests of children and society more effectively.

3.2 Six key themes underly the administrative changes to which the Government is now committed:

- (a) devolution and decentralization of power and responsibility where appropriate to local and regional units;
- (b) increased participation by parents, community members, teachers and principals in education governance at all levels;
- (c) improved consultation;
- (d) economy and efficiency in management;
- (e) effective co-ordination of functions and policies; and
- (f) appropriate mechanisms for internal and external reviews of schools.

All six received strong support in the submissions, and deserve separate discussion.

3.3 Devolution and Decentralization

Devolution refers to the transfer of authority and responsibility to other organisations further from the centre within an administrative or governmental system, while decentralization refers to the transfer of powers and functions away from the centre to other levels within the same organisation. Effective devolution and decentralization both require the transfer of real power and functions and an increase in discretion and choice exercised by recipients. In modern government strong tendencies operate towards increased centralization in administration; these need to be countered by deliberate efforts to devolve and decentralize.

3.4 During the Review many thoughtful individuals and groups urged transfer of power and responsibility, wherever possible, from the central office of the Education Department towards local and regional levels in order to achieve greater efficiency and to foster among schools and school communities a greater sense of commitment and responsibility, and this view has been accepted. Thus it is proposed to continue to work towards substantial devolution and decentralization. Wherever possible, functions currently performed at central office level will become the responsibility of schools and regions.

3.5 At the same time, it should be noted that views with regard to devolution and decentralization differed sharply. A number of submissions urged no further devolution or decentralization to regions or schools, while some recommended increased responsibility at the centre. Nevertheless, the Government's view is that on balance increased devolution and decentralization are desirable and necessary goals.

3.6 The Westminster system demands that a government shall be accountable to the people for the spending of public funds and that every segment

of every department which expends them shall in turn be accountable through the Minister to Parliament. Thus devolution and decentralization of authority can proceed only in accordance with broad policies acceptable to government. Even though government must accept responsibility for the policies finally adopted, they will be more acceptable and effective if there has been adequate consultation during their development. Where decision-making is decentralized, measures to ensure accountability and observance of constraints must safeguard the ultimate responsibility of government.

3.7 In proposing increased devolution and decentralization within a defined framework, the following concerns have been taken into account:

- . the diversity of needs which exist within and between schools and local communities;
- . the imbalance in potential and in resources which will require positive discrimination in some areas;
- . the importance of enhancing opportunities for young people whose prospects of effective learning are for any reason limited at present;
- . the professional rights and responsibilities of principals, teachers, and ancillary staff in the schooling process;
- . the rights and responsibilities of parents and students;
- . variations in expertise and community interest available to different schools; and
- . the need to develop or maintain appropriate checks and balances to ensure that education meets the needs of society as a whole.

3.8 Further devolution and decentralization of power and responsibility should assist the system to become more sensitive and responsive

to the needs of all concerned. Where there is a capacity to identify and meet local needs and circumstances, there is encouragement to use local initiative, to strengthen mutual support between the school and its community, and to develop increased responsibility and accountability. Participation by principals, teachers and school councils in effective decision-making undoubtedly also fosters a stronger commitment to the success of the school or enterprise than is likely to be the case with those who see themselves merely as implementers of decisions made elsewhere.

- 3.9 The arguments so far identified refer to improving the quality of decision-making. But there are also educational considerations. Teachers and principals are more likely to develop curriculum and to formulate the most effective learning programmes for the students for whom they are responsible, if it is clear that the real responsibility for providing the programmes rests with the school.
- 3.10 It should be made clear that added administrative responsibility will not be thrust on schools or school councils which consider they are at present unable or unwilling to accept such additional commitments. But the intention is to enable those schools and school councils which consider they are ready to assume new responsibilities to do so, and to provide adequate support and advice to assist them. Efforts will be made to raise the expertise of councils through changes in their structure, provision of more frequent and adequate information and advice, and opportunity for members to participate in training seminars for school councillors.
- 3.11 The proposals for devolution and decentralization are seen as a further extension of former initiatives. During the 1970s, important moves on these lines included regional initiatives,

legislation relating to school councils, a range of innovative programmes, and the growing recognition of schools as community-based organisations.

3.12 Participation

Participation in this context refers to providing opportunity to contribute to policy development and formulation.

- 3.13 Educational theorists have long recognised that the key elements in the educative process are pupil, parent, teacher, and environment. The best educational interaction is widely acknowledged to be that which takes place between the child on the one hand and a teacher and parent, in a harmonious relationship, on the other hand. This has sometimes been used to found an argument that schools could be left solely to parental and teacher governance. But such a view fails to acknowledge financial reality and the need for equity between all government schools. It also disregards the wider demands that society as a whole places upon the school as a vehicle by which commonly accepted standards and values pass from one generation to the next, or the needs of the State for intelligent, participating citizens who can meet broadly based requirements, or the local community's desire for competent, reliable young people who can play their parts in the life of the community whether as employees, employers or otherwise. It further fails to recognise the need for true equality of opportunity for all children in the State school system. Thus participants in governance must include representatives of community groups and interests, as well as teachers and parents. Further, in the interests of a proper sharing of responsibility, education professionals must not dominate the composition of school councils and other broad-based advisory bodies.

- 3.14 Parents have the right to ask questions and to have them answered, to receive information, and to know and understand what arrangements

are proposed for their children. The development of a relationship between teachers and parents which allows both to see themselves as partners in the education of a child and, at the same time to recognise their mutual right to happiness and a sense of satisfaction and achievement, is a goal to which all schools should aspire.

- 3.15 Further still, increased participation by parents and community members is seen as being desirable in order to provide greater opportunity for input from and access to educational information and services for groups as diverse as Aborigines, ethnic communities, residents of small country towns, and handicapped people of various kinds. In the intervening century since the public school system was founded, Victorian society has become more complex and multi-faceted.
- 3.16 School systems exist for the benefit of their students and the best interests of those students must be the guiding principle in determining the most appropriate means by which any system's aims and objectives can be achieved. The children of Victoria will, in the view of the Government, be served best by a school system which encourages each school to operate within the overall framework as independently as the experience and readiness of its council will permit. The emphasis in this Paper is upon the individual child in the school and the management structures necessary to serve children's interests, and not on structures designed primarily to serve the interests of administration. This implies too the gradual development of certain educational services at the local and regional levels and the gradual phasing out of certain services at the central office level.
- 3.17 It is recognised that the achievement of significant devolution of control and broader participation in governance will require effort

and determination. School councils, in particular, will need assistance and encouragement if they are successfully to accept wider responsibilities, and this will be given.

3.18 Consultation

Consultation with regard to the management of public education refers to the process of sharing information with and securing feed-back and comments from participants and from community interests. Effective consultation leads to much healthier and more open relationships, better decisions and policies, and greater efficiency.

- 3.19 Many submissions pointed to the need for schools and for administrative agencies to provide more detailed information to parents and communities with regard to objectives and programmes. They also urged more frequent consultation, involving many more individuals than merely the members of school councils and other official advisory bodies. This view is accepted.

3.20 Economy and Efficiency

Few would question the desirability of economy and efficiency as goals in the management of public organisations. Economy means simply operation at the lowest cost necessary to achieve the desired results, and without waste and unnecessary duplication. The concept of efficiency contains two elements. The first is effectiveness which involves the relationship between purpose and result. An administrative unit can be said to be effective to the extent that it achieves the purpose for which it was established. The second element involves consideration of the resources used in achieving the result. A programme, for example, is efficient only if its effectiveness is achieved with an economic use of resources.

- 3.21 Emphasis will be given to mechanisms and policies aimed to achieve increased economy and efficiency. These will include, at school,

regional and state-wide levels, evaluations of particular programmes, reviews of the performance of administrative units, and elimination of unnecessary duplication. Further, in any education system, it is essential that administrative functions are seen basically as services provided to assist schools and facilitate the teaching and learning process, and not as ends in themselves. Their demands on resources thus should be kept to the minimum in order that the maximum support and resource levels be provided to schools.

3.22 Co-ordination

Co-ordination is a frequently used, but seldom defined term. It means simply the regulation or adjustment of activity or functions in order to secure greater overall harmony and consistency, to achieve greater efficiency and a more desirable balance, and to avoid unnecessary overlap and wasteful use of scarce resources. This regulation may occur between different units of the one organisation, or between different organisations.

- 3.23 In any education system, there is a particular need for the various administrative agencies and educational institutions to work in close co-operation in order to secure harmony in functions and policies. Without such harmony, programmes may pursue divergent or conflicting goals, to the detriment of children and the community. Procedures must ensure proper advice on priorities for development and on competing claims for resources.

3.24 School Reviews

Reviews are an important element in the efficient management of any school system. Through reviews principals and teachers are able to reconsider objectives and broad policy, identify strengths and weaknesses in school programmes, evaluate the extent to which the school curriculum in its broadest sense is achieving objectives,

and plan more effectively to meet student needs. Parents, community members and government have a right to know how effectively individual schools are meeting their stated objectives and working towards achieving system-wide objectives. Similarly reviews are equally important at the regional and system-wide levels.

4.0 PRESENT ORGANISATION

4.1 The Education Department is presently structured on teaching divisions (based on an age-grade classification of students) and service divisions combined with functional co-ordination in the Office of the Director-General in the areas of building, curriculum, finance and personnel.

4.2 In each of those four functional areas responsibilities are currently exercised and distributed in different ways. In the building area, regional priority review committees recommend regional priorities; school councils help plan new facilities; and schools are taking increased responsibility for maintenance and construction. Responsibility for curriculum development has been increasingly accepted at school level, but with support provided by central office and the regions. The administration of the finance system is predominantly a central office responsibility but schools do have some input and for technical schools provision has been made for budget submissions from each school. Similarly, technical schools have developed a well accepted system of participating actively in the selection of principals and vice-principals, though all appointments are still made centrally.

4.3 Policy is made at all levels. Each school has been encouraged to publish a school policy. Regional policy is determined both by

local needs and the central framework. Policy-making at the central level (by Cabinet, the Ministers, the Office of the Director-General and the divisions) is concerned with issues and practices which have system-wide implications.

- 4.4 Planning is a responsibility of all levels of the organisation. Co-ordination of plans developed at the central, regional, and school levels is the responsibility of the Office of the Director-General.

5.0 NEW ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

- 5.1 The Government will reorganise the administration of the Education Department at school, regional and central levels in order to achieve the reform which it considers both necessary and urgent. There will be a re-allocation of roles and responsibilities at each of the three levels so that:

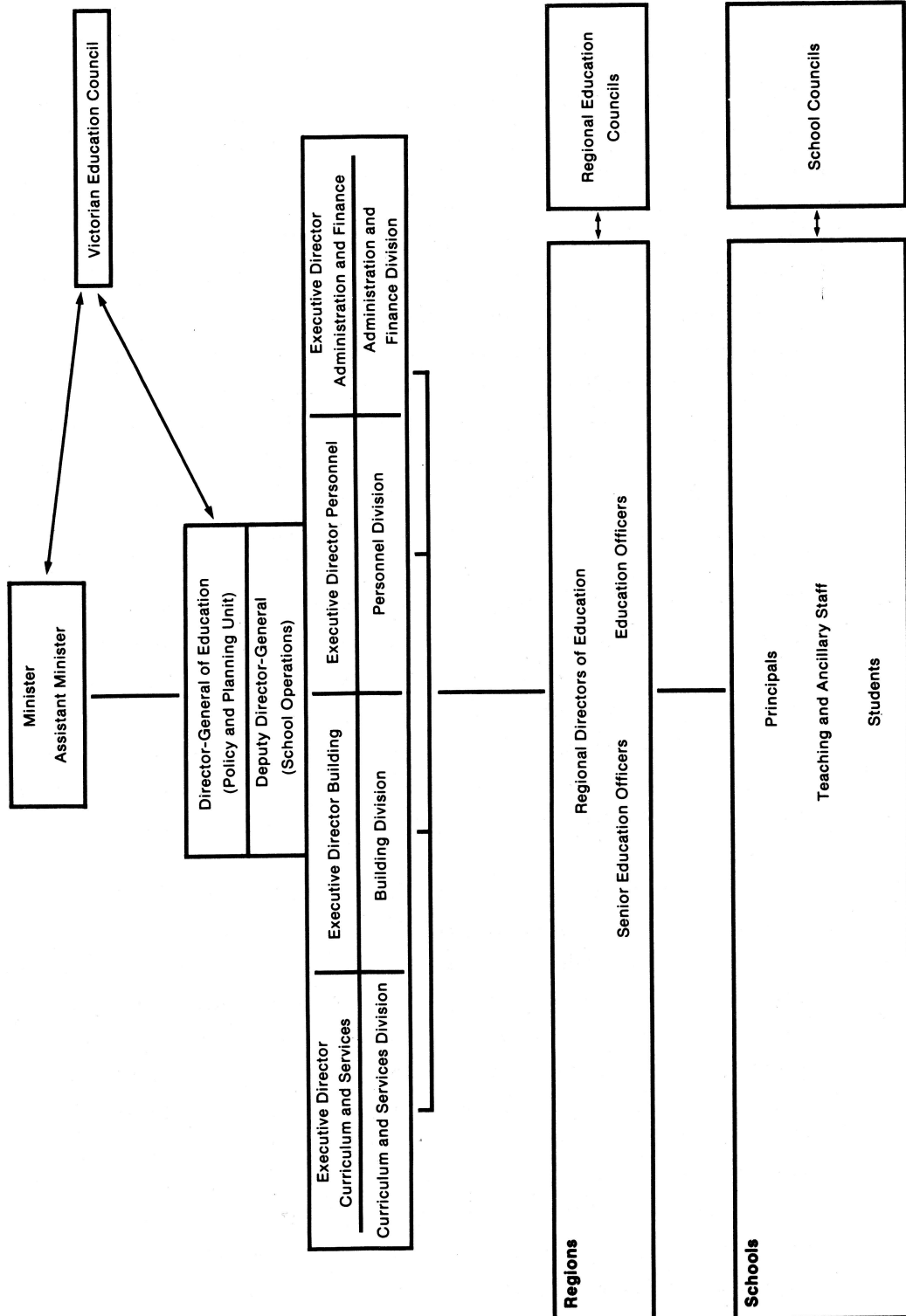
- . effective decisions will be made at the most appropriate level;
- . greater emphasis will be placed on co-ordination of activities, on consultation and on wider participation in governance;
- . schools will better meet the needs of students at the local level, but in the context of policies and curriculum guidelines affecting students generally and the system as a whole; and
- . increased efficiency, accountability, and a more equitable distribution of resources can be achieved.

- 5.2 The new thrusts and decisions are spelt out in detail in the paragraphs which follow. They include:

- . adoption of a corporate management approach at the top administrative level;
- . establishment of a corporate Policy and Planning Unit;
- . development of four functional areas as the basis for the central office structure, and elimination of school divisions as administrative units;
- . affirmation of the role of the Director-General of Education;
- . opportunity at every level to provide for wider participation and to protect community interests;
- . devolution and decentralization of functions and responsibility wherever practicable at regional and school levels, with particular emphasis to be given to strengthening regional offices as administrative units;
- . continued emphasis on school responsibility in curriculum development, but at the same time within the context of state-wide core curriculum framework and guidelines;
- . development of appropriate school review policies and procedures;
- . adoption of a teacher promotion system based predominantly on merit, with the provision of additional promotions opportunities in schools;
- . opportunity for some school level involvement in staff appointments; and
- . acceptance that the Education Department should be the employer of members of the Teaching Service.

The accompanying diagram summarizes the main elements of the new organisation structure at central office, regional and school levels

NEW ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, VICTORIA



5.3 School Level

The Government accepts the principle that increasing responsibility should be given to schools and school councils. Schools will be encouraged to take greater responsibility in developing educational policies and curriculum, in establishing bases for forward planning and consulting with parents and communities, and in publishing and explaining details of school policy and instructional programmes. In consultation and agreement with the school council, the principal will prepare a school policy and in consultation with the teaching staff will arrange for the development of school programmes. Core curriculum, however, will be developed within a system of state-wide guidelines. Principals will have opportunity to influence the selection of senior teaching staff in particular, although appointments will continue to be made centrally.

5.4 The Government will continue to enhance the role of school councils in policy development and implementation and to ensure that the interests of children have the major consideration. The objective will be to ensure that councils perform their important role in providing independent advice and perspective. The school councils legislation will be modified to ensure that professional educationists are not able to dominate the composition of school councils.

5.5 School councils may elect to be involved in the appointment of principals and deputy principals, and opportunities will be progressively expanded for them to take initiatives which result in buildings and facilities being in tune with the school curriculum and local needs. They will continue to exercise their responsibilities with regard to minor works, repairs, maintenance and the development of grounds. The combination of local participation with local accountability has demonstrated that in the area of building, greater local satisfaction and cost benefits can be achieved. The Government's objective is to foster participative planning with regional and central offices with regard to building projects.

5.6 School councils and principals will together be required to develop policy statements and to consult in the process with parents, teachers, students and the wider community, and internal reviews will be supplemented for all schools by an external component. While appreciating the need for diversity and responsiveness, it is important that schools develop acceptable methods of ensuring accountability, both in terms of the local community and in relation to other levels within the Education Department and Government. One aspect of this lies in the publication and clear articulation of the school policy and programme. A further development relates to the extension of existing arrangements for school evaluation and review in a form which is as acceptable as practicable to the participants and which will encourage schools continuously to test progress in implementation of aims and objectives. Evaluation should be undertaken by the professional staff or the school under the leadership of the principal on a continuous basis to monitor the extent to which objectives are being achieved, to ascertain and facilitate remediation of any deficiencies, and to provide feedback for curriculum decision-making and review of objectives, with annual reports being made available to the school council and the regional office. Internal evaluation will need, however, to be supplemented by school reviews, involving external personnel and conducted at specified intervals or earlier where it appears desirable. Primary and secondary schools already have accepted procedures and, using these as guides and following consultation, a system appropriate to technical schools will be developed.

5.7 The recent report of the Ministerial Committee on Special Assistance Programmes emphasised the importance of providing services for children with particular needs both within the secure environment of their local schools and through easily accessible district-based multi-disciplinary centres. These objectives will be pursued progressively within the availability of current resources.

- 5.8 Zoning policies place limitations on full freedom of choice. If schools have reasonable freedom to develop a significant component of the school programme in response to the local and special needs, there should be a desirable increase in the diversity of programmes offered throughout the system. Where that diversity exists, in country or city, it would seem desirable to recognise the right of parents to choose more freely the kind of education they prefer for their children. Some submissions, however, have drawn attention to possible adverse effects of uncontrolled de-zoning.
- 5.9 De-zoning experiments will be undertaken on a strictly limited and controlled, and properly monitored, trial basis. In these experiments emphasis will be given to providing increased choice based on more adequate information. If parents and students are to make choices between schools, they need information on school objectives and emphases, and to be provided with outlines of school programmes. Cluster development, however, may offer a better alternative than de-zoning. Through a cluster arrangement, schools in close proximity to one another may be able to specialize in particular fields and offer courses that no one school could mount alone. This may make it possible for a student from one school to participate in courses run by a nearby school.

5.10 Regional Level

The Government will continue to implement and promote its policy of devolution and decentralization of government administration. Policies will be progressively implemented to expand the responsibilities of regional offices in providing services to schools, in contributing to policy formulation at the central level in co-ordinating activities and undertaking planning, in becoming a focus for accountability within the region, and in serving as a direct link from schools to central office and the Ministers. Under the new arrangements, regional offices will assume many

functions which currently are the responsibility of the central office, while reorganisation of central office administration on functional lines will enhance the authority of regional units, reduce the potential for conflict between administrative units, and be conducive to efficiency, thereby helping schools to secure prompt responses to their requests.

- 5.11 An expanded role for regional offices is essential in order to decrease administrative 'overload' at central level and to provide for more efficient delivery of services to schools. Increased regionalization is also desirable for other reasons. Some functions are outside the current capacity of schools, and a number of services cannot be provided effectively at school level because they involve economies of scale. Further, on issues which affect schools generally and the system as a whole, it is obvious that no individual school can be the final arbiter. Some decisions must be made at the centre whilst others which cannot be finally made at the local level may be more effectively made at a point closer to the schools than the central office. Thus regional offices will exercise expanded responsibilities for consultation, co-ordination and planning to provide support for schools in their areas.
- 5.12 Just as each school principal works with a school council for mutual advice and support, a broadly-based regional education council will be established in each region to advise and support the regional director. Membership will include principals, school council members, teachers, parents, persons from post-secondary education institutions, and wider membership representing local authorities, and employer and employee organisations. The composition of each regional education council will take account of the particular characteristics of the region. The role of regional priority review committees and regional councils for technical education will be absorbed by regional education councils.

The councils will initially be advisory bodies, but the scope of their role will be reviewed in the light of experience. As broader decision-making powers are shown to be warranted, they will be granted. Regional education councils will be required to collaborate with other regional bodies.

- 5.13 Stated Government policy is to have eighteen regions for administrative purposes. While education regions will be progressively adapted to meet these boundaries, this may not necessarily require the establishment of separate regional offices in each. Any alterations made either in the number of regions or in powers and responsibilities associated with them will be undertaken in such a way as to make these offices more responsive to the needs and aspirations of schools, and more capable of assisting in the implementation of co-operatively established central policies. In this context, recognition will be given to the importance of accounting for the financial costs of a regionalised administration.
- 5.14 The role of regional offices will be expanded with regard to each of the four functional areas. In curriculum, regional offices will provide support to schools in the form of curriculum consultancy, curriculum materials development, in-service activities and specialist services (e.g. psychologists, speech therapists, social workers and special assistance resource teachers as well as library services and audio-visual services personnel). They will also co-ordinate and manage support and specialist services to schools, co-ordinate in-service activities within each region, provide resources to assist schools in curriculum evaluation, assess overall regional needs, and provide an input to state-wide policy development.
- 5.15 In the personnel field, the regional office will increasingly take responsibility for the employment of emergency teachers, control

and deployment of relieving teachers, oversight of pupil welfare, co-ordination of flexible use or sharing of staff, selection of staff for specific regional projects, control and deployment of officers allocated to perform pastoral work, and co-ordination of all matters relating to school camps, excursions, and tours, in each case in accordance with state-wide guidelines. The regional office will liaise with the Personnel Division on any emergency staff situations and make submissions with regard to the special needs of individual schools. It will also take responsibility for the further investigation of any complaint by parents and members of the community regarding incidents occurring at schools and the quality of school instructional programmes.

- 5.16 In the area of building, the regional priority review system will continue to be used (through regional education councils) for recommending priorities on major works. Greater emphasis will be given to the co-ordinating role of regional offices in all building matters. Regional offices will encourage joint ventures with other bodies and will support schools in their movement towards undertaking increased responsibility.
- 5.17 With regard to administration and finance, regional offices will be responsible for the local management of all funds, except those which for reasons of efficiency must be handled on a State-wide basis from central office. The range of decentralization in this field will be the subject of consultation between functional divisions and regional offices. Regions will also develop specialised advisory financial services to schools, monitor school financial needs and expenditures, and establish specific school financial needs within the context of central policies. Apart from these tasks, regional offices will be expected to contribute to State-wide policy formulation and forward planning generally.

- 5.18 To carry out their expanded responsibilities in consultation, co-ordination, planning, policy development and providing services to schools, regional offices will need wise and sustained educational leadership. All senior appointments must be of a calibre and at a salary level appropriate for the identified responsibilities. New procedures will be developed for the selection and appointment of regional directors, which may include provision for input from regional education councils so as to ensure the best possible appointments for particular posts, either generally or for specified periods.
- 5.19 In recognition of the range of functions performed by inspectors, their title will be changed from inspector to senior education officer. Currently inspectors exercise a multiplicity of roles: advising, supporting and encouraging teachers and principals; and participating in judgments of the effectiveness both of individual teachers and of the work of schools. The performance of all these tasks will continue to be needed, but increasingly there will be the responsibility of teams at regional level, comprising liaison officers and curriculum and special assistance consultants and led by senior education officers. Particular care will be necessary to ensure that the important functions currently performed by district inspectors with regard to primary schools are maintained.
- 5.20 Regional offices will be requested to facilitate and encourage the development of networks of district service centres to assist in the delivery to schools, groups of schools, school councils and school communities of information and technical and professional curriculum support services, including in-service education and special assistance resources. Schools and school communities should be actively involved in the management of such centres which will be under the responsibility of senior education officers.

- 5.21 Specialist services for the education of migrants, Aborigines, and the disabled, and therapeutic and support services, will be administered through regional offices. Further decentralization of other services will be encouraged to meet the needs of schools. Although arrangements already exist for neighbouring primary schools to share library, music, art, and physical education teachers with the aim of enriching the educational experiences of all children, these will need development to operate with greater effectiveness, particularly for country children. In specialist fields where staffing and resources are in short supply, regional administrations may have some advantages over central administration in assessing precise needs and deficiencies and in finding means of meeting them sensitively and flexibly.
- 5.22 The Government will continue its support for community education. Over the past decade, the community education movement in Victoria has had a remarkable growth, and now a number of government departments and agencies together with a wide range of voluntary groups are involved. The new Community Education Council is encouraging inter-departmental and inter-agency co-operation and co-ordination. The Government's commitment to community education has been demonstrated by various initiatives; of particular importance, are the appointment of Community Education Officers and the increasing number of shared facilities, such as school-community libraries, gymnasiums and theatres.
- 5.23 Central Level
- The central office has a pivotal role to play in facilitating the development of core curriculum guidelines, co-ordinating activities, determining and reviewing policy decisions, assessing educational priorities for the State, and undertaking forward planning.
- 5.24 In order to achieve better co-ordination of policies at senior management level and to improve policy formulation capability, a

Corporate Management Group will be formed. Membership will comprise the Minister of Education, the Assistant Minister, the Director-General of Education, the Deputy Director-General and four Executive Directors whose position will replace that of Assistant Directors-General. This group will meet regularly, with prior circulation of agenda items and supporting papers. It will discuss problems and emerging needs, consider policy options, take and disseminate decisions and monitor the implementation and evaluation of policies.

- 5.25 Establishment of the Corporate Management Group will constitute an important new departure in educational governance in this country. It will require a move away from the traditional and hierarchical style of departmental policy and decision-making, towards the corporate management techniques of successful boards and commissions. It will introduce a team approach to policy formulation and review; it will facilitate the exchange of information and viewpoints; it will increase consistency and cohesion in decision-making; and it will provide for greater accountability.
- 5.26 A Policy and Planning Unit will be developed. It will be responsible to the Director-General, but will service the needs of the Minister and the Corporate Management Group. Its members will require high level research and policy analysis skills; they will be drawn mainly from the present Planning Services Division.
- 5.27 A Victorian Education Council will be established to provide advice on a regular basis to both the Ministers and the Director-General of Education. This Council will comprise the Director-General of Education; the Chairman of the Victorian Post-Secondary Education Commission; representatives of the Victorian Institute of Secondary Education, the Technical and Further Education Board, and the Council of Adult Education; representatives of non-government schools and

school systems; principals and teachers from government schools; representatives of tertiary education institutions; and other members appointed by the Minister to represent parents, industry and commerce, trade unions, and ethnic and minority groups. The Council will meet regularly, or at the special request of the Minister, and will be serviced by a small secretariat in the Education Department. One important function for the Council will be to provide advice to the Ministers on priorities within, and co-ordination of, proposed initiatives from the various providers of educational services across the education portfolio in the State. On occasions, it will be asked to advise on reallocation of priorities within existing provisions, and on proposed rationalization of functions and educational programmes. It will substantially replace the existing Council of Public Education established in 1910.

- 5.28 Functions currently performed by the Council of Public Education with regard to non-government schools will become the interim responsibility of the Director-General of Education, advised by a joint committee comprising representatives of non-government schools and the Education Department. Some adaptation of the existing Liaison Committee operating between the Education Department and registered schools could fulfil this function. The precise long term arrangements will be developed in consultation with representatives of the non-government schools and school systems.
- 5.29 The current responsibilities of the Divisions of Primary, Secondary, and Technical Education, Teacher Education and Administrative Services will be distributed between the four new functional divisions and Regional Offices. Each functional division will be headed by an Executive Director. Substantial complexity is added to an organisation where teaching divisions based on an age-grade classification of students are combined with divisions based on service roles and with functionally organized divisions. At the

same time, the State is administered on a regional basis, whilst the office of the Director-General has been organized on functional lines. This arrangement is inefficient, uneconomical and organisationally dysfunctional. It leads to duplication and replication, and promotes conflict rather than co-operation between administrative units. Consequently, the responsibilities of the three school divisions (other than for special schools) will be distributed between functional directorates and regional offices. Abolition of the teaching divisions as administrative units does not mean abolition of the current promotion structures for primary, secondary or technical schools, or any change in the present classification of schools into primary, secondary and technical schools. Within the new Personnel Division separate staffing officers will provide for the needs of primary, secondary and technical schools; similar arrangements will apply in other functional divisions to cater for the special requirements of these different types of schools.

- 5.30 In any organisational structure, the role of the chief executive is crucial. As permanent head of the Education Department, the Director-General will be the chief executive, and will continue to be senior adviser to the Ministers. Within the new structure, the Director-General will take particular responsibility for broad policy development and for forward planning. Each of the four new functional Divisions - Curriculum and Services; Personnel; Buildings and Administration and Finance - will be headed by an Executive Director. The Executive Directors will be essentially managers and division heads, in addition to their policy role within the corporate management group. The Deputy Director-General will provide co-ordination between the four functional divisions and with regard to school operations, including those of special schools. The Deputy Director-General will exercise general supervision over the distribution of all resources among schools, and will monitor operations at regional and school levels with a particular responsibility with regard to school evaluation and reviews.

- 5.31 The new Curriculum and Services Division will be formed by amalgamating all curriculum and curriculum support functions currently performed by the existing Divisions of Special Services, Primary, Secondary and Technical Education. Pending decisions arising from the current review by the TAFE Board it will also include the TAFE Services and Support Services Units of the existing Planning Services Division. The new Personnel Division will incorporate the related functions currently performed by the Divisions of Primary, Secondary and Technical Education, Special Services and Teacher Education, and will include a new industrial relations section. The new Building Division will be formed by amalgamating the existing Building Operations Division, the Facilities Planning Unit of Planning Services, and the related functions currently performed by the Divisions of Primary, Secondary and Technical Education, Special Services and Teacher Education. The new Division of Administration and Finance will be formed by amalgamating the existing Divisions of Administrative Services and the Finance and Accounts Offices, together with related functions currently performed by the Divisions of Primary, Secondary and Technical Education, Special Services and Teacher Education.
- 5.32 At present, doubt exists as to whether the Education Department or the Teachers' Tribunal is the employer of members of the Teaching Service or as to whether each is to be regarded as the employer for some purposes. The Education Department currently possesses only some of the characteristics and functions normally attributed to an employer. Administrative logic demands, and the submissions almost universally accepted, that the Department should both be, and be seen to be, the employer. The Government accepts that position. This implies changes in the powers and functions of the Teachers' Tribunal and the Committee of Classifiers.
- 5.33 The Teachers' Tribunal should be remodelled placing increased emphasis upon negotiation and conciliation prior to any formal

arbitration. Major changes are urgent, but must be initiated with great care. Continuation of discussions initiated with teacher unions, consultation with all parties affected, and the achievement of the maximum possible degree of consensus are all highly desirable.

- 5.34 Greater emphasis on curriculum responsibility at school level will lead to increased demand for curriculum services, both as advice on curriculum development and in the provision of curriculum materials and equipment. Considerable economies of scale can be achieved if materials and equipment are produced centrally. In order to provide an adequate support service for curriculum development, there will need to be a central curriculum unit but curriculum consultants and support services will be attached to regional offices.

6.0 DIRECTIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT IN FUNCTIONAL AREAS

- 6.1 The previous section outlined the planned changes at each of the three levels of authority - school, regional, and centre. This section elaborates on these changes with regard to four functional areas - curriculum and services; personnel; building; administration and finance - and with regard to policy and planning.

6.2 Curriculum and Services

The proposals set out in the Green Paper with regard to curriculum produced varying responses. Some submissions supported the concept of a core curriculum centrally prescribed and developed, but a majority clearly did not. Apart from this, many submissions considered that the concept of core curriculum was not sufficiently detailed or precise. Careful consideration has been given to the comments made and points raised in the submissions.

- 6.3 In simple terms, curriculum is the sum of learning experiences to which students are exposed as they pass through the schools. It represents the vehicle by which objectives of the school and of the system are translated into action.
- 6.4 A specific objective in the Statement of 'Aims and Objectives of Education in Victoria' requires that the aims of education be pursued in all schools through the development of a core curriculum for students generally, with provision for individual schools to pursue locally based components to balance the school programme. Core curriculum is often confused with a list of compulsory subjects taken by all students, or with detailed syllabuses imposed on all schools. Others confuse the idea of core curriculum with the so called 'three Rs' or 'the basics'. Such confusion is unfortunate. A widely accepted definition of core curriculum is 'that set of basic and essential learnings and experiences which can be expected of all students who pass through our schools'. Basic learnings are those which provide a foundation for further learning and continuing personal development, such as reading skills or oral communication skills. Essential learnings and experiences are those which are required by all young people who are to function effectively in the cultural, economic, political, group, family and interpersonal life of our society. Core curriculum thus takes into account the basic needs of students in terms of personal development and social participation at all stages. But the core alone does not provide a full or total education, since in addition a range of specialist, technical and advanced studies is required. For this reason the policy is for the aims of education to be pursued through a core curriculum plus locally based components.
- 6.5 The case for a core (or common) curriculum and for Government to accept responsibility in the area of curriculum policy rests on three related arguments. The first is based on the rights of children. Under a system of compulsory education, all children

must have a clear and definite right of access to worthwhile knowledge and enriching experiences, which will develop their abilities, their individual judgment, and their sense of responsibility to enable them to become contributing members of society. No child should be deprived of teaching in areas regarded by the community as basic. Second, society today requires much more of its citizens in terms of range of competencies and skills than a century ago. It is entitled to demand that the education system meets the needs of the community. Third, effective participation by individuals in contemporary life, which is an entitlement and responsibility of all, depends on a wide, complex and interrelated set of learnings, well beyond basic competence in reading, writing and arithmetic. The achievement of that objective is in the interests both of the individual and society.

6.6 The notion of core curriculum is of central importance to the main thrust of this paper. Through broad-based consultation, a state-wide core curriculum framework will be established, setting out fundamental learnings for students at different stages. This will not take the form of subject syllabuses or statements of behavioural objectives. Rather it will consist of guidelines, pointing to key objectives and to different kinds of knowledge, experience, skills and learning which should be made available to all children. With the help and support of central office and regional office staff, it will be the responsibility of each school to translate the core curriculum into teaching programmes - into means by which it is taught and experienced in classrooms. Each school will also develop its own elective or optional studies. The role of the central office and regional offices in providing support and advice, detailed information and core curriculum materials will be vital.

6.7 The content of the core curriculum will require careful attention. It is a matter where many participants in the educative process,

including teachers, parents and community groups, have a rightful and vital interest. Construction of the core curriculum framework and guidelines will also need to draw on expertise and insights from different branches of learning.

- 6.8 The fact that core learnings are seen as being fundamental, does not mean that student progress and achievement must be assessed by external bodies. At the same time, effective assessment is a key component of the teaching and learning process, and will be the subject of further consultation.
- 6.9 With respect to curriculum development at school level, decision-making should be based on the needs of the students as well as on the needs of the local community. Since schools generally serve a particular locality, school-based decisions should have regard to the total environment of the school. School policies and objectives will be set by the principal in consultation and agreement with the school council. In consultation with the teaching staff and where desirable with the school council, the principal will arrange for the development of curriculum to achieve school objectives. The local school objectives should complement those applying for the system as a whole so that each school has a total set of educational objectives which it seeks to achieve through sound teaching. Within each school, curriculum should be spelt out in detailed and internally consistent programmes. Programme development at school level must be a co-operative exercise, shared collectively by the staff under the leadership of the principal. New proposals will need to be subjected to careful scrutiny and the success of the whole enterprise will depend heavily on leadership provided by senior staff. School-based curriculum development is at the heart of this policy; however, it should not be confused with individual teacher-controlled curriculum, or with curriculum developed outside the guidelines or framework.

- 6.10 The general thrust to curriculum now adopted by the Government accords with views presented in numerous submissions. Moreover, in the Community Expectations Survey there was strong support for the idea that curriculum responsibility in each school should be primarily a matter for the principal and the staff. At the same time, it needs to be recognised that parents and community members have a right to contribute in the area of curriculum, that curriculum will flow from the school policy prepared in collaboration with the school council, and that cognizance must be taken of guidelines which apply to the State as a whole. Parents too may play a role in curriculum development. To do so they will need to be informed of the aims and objectives of the school and to have access to teachers and information on which curriculum is based. They may need encouragement and assistance in understanding total school curriculum and should be put at ease when seeking information. They will need answers which are informative rather than evasive or defensive.
- 6.11 Many submissions forcefully argued that, although curriculum must serve the needs of society in general, it exists primarily to fulfil the needs of individual children. This point needs emphasis. The central level of the Education Department will ensure that the individual rights of those with physical, cultural, economic, or social backgrounds which place them at a disadvantage are protected in schools and in the curriculum options offered. The Government reaffirms its commitment to multicultural education; it believes that all citizens should become proficient in the use of English, that migrants from overseas and their children should have opportunities to learn and study the language, customs and history of their forebears, and that all citizens should have the opportunity to study the language, customs, and habits of a variety of cultures.

- 6.12 After consultation with school councils and school staffs, principals will develop statements outlining school objectives and programmes and make these readily available to students, parents and the community, and at the regional office. These statements will need to be combined with relevant information arising from the most recent evaluation of the effectiveness of each school in terms of its stated objectives.
- 6.13 Each school should initiate teaching methods and procedures which endeavour to link sound educational theory with practice. This will require teachers, and especially principals, to be aware of relevant professional literature and research findings. New procedures should be carefully monitored to ensure their effectiveness and appropriateness.
- 6.14 Unduly early or narrow specialisation by children into academic and practical streams should be avoided in all schools. For those who enter academic streams opportunity should be provided for practical learning, and in both academic and practical streams the maximum degree of flexibility possible with regard to choice of subjects and opportunity to change direction should be provided.
- 6.15 Personnel
- The Government will make available to each school council the opportunity of being involved in the selection of the principal and vice-principal. The Green Paper suggested that, if devolution of authority to local schools is to occur to its fullest extent, it will be desirable for staff appointments to be made increasingly at the local level. It noted that successful initiatives have already been undertaken within the Technical Division with regard to the selection of principals and vice-principals. In the case of vacancies, school councils thus will have the opportunity to interview applicants, or selected applicants, from a list of names prepared by the Education Department, and to comment on their suitability.

Appointments, however, will be made by the central office and the right of appeal will remain. School council participation in the selection of principals and vice-principals should provide for a higher level of compatibility between the characteristics of senior personnel and the particular needs of each school and its community. It should also increase the level of harmony and co-operation between school council, principal and staff. The Government was prepared to facilitate further extension of school council involvement in staff selection, but many councils were opposed to this. Councils, however, supported the view that they should be able to exercise responsibility for all matters related to the employment of ancillary staff.

- 6.16 Opportunity for principals to influence the appointment of individual teachers would seem to follow logically from school councils being involved in the appointment of principals and vice-principals. It also would appear to be a corollary to giving schools under the leadership of the principal increased responsibility in setting objectives and developing curricula. Significantly, in the Community Expectations Survey, respondents thought the appointment of individual teachers to schools should be primarily the responsibility of the central office and the local school principal. Submissions from school staffs and teacher organisations, however, overwhelmingly pressed for retention of central appointment of staff. The Government will continue the policy of central appointments to schools, but opportunity will be provided for principals to have input. When vacancies occur, or are about to occur, principals will inform central office of their particular school needs and requirements. The new Personnel Division will endeavour to match appointments with perceived needs and requirements, and where possible to consult with principals.

- 6.17 The new Personnel Division will absorb functions currently performed by the Division of Teacher Education and will carry out all

responsibilities of the Education Department with regard to personnel, i.e., the formal employment of all teaching staff appointed to schools and the initial determination of terms and conditions of employment subject to revision of the role of the Teachers' Tribunal.

- 6.18 The selection of staff to schools should so far as possible take into account curriculum and learning priorities. Staffing levels will be determined within available resources by the central office having regard to enrolment numbers and the special needs established by schools. As resources permit, it is intended that regional offices will be given further opportunity to assist in overcoming anomalies, deficiencies and inequalities which may be ascertained in regions.
- 6.19 The principal is the educational leader and administrator at the most critical point in the system and is in a strong position to influence the course of education and its effectiveness. Serious consideration must therefore be given to the criteria for selecting principals. Proven educational leadership must take precedence over seniority, and there is strong justification for requiring formal qualifications in educational administration as a pre-requisite for all appointments as principal. Continued emphasis on in-service education in educational administration is necessary. There is a growing body of knowledge in relation to effective administrative processes and procedures to which principals and aspiring principals and other administrators should be exposed. The Institute of Educational Administration is proving of great value in this area and participants have rated highly its intensive programmes.
- 6.20 The Government will require a more detailed, comprehensive and co-ordinated approach to the professional development of teachers and to in-service education, with as much responsibility as possible for co-ordination being placed on the regional office. The

regional office will be responsible for deciding whether teachers and principals with the necessary expertise to conduct in-service education activities can be released from duty. The central administration will, however, retain responsibility for the overall co-ordination of in-service education, particularly in relationship to tertiary institutions. The Education Department will develop appropriate in-service training programmes to assist those school councils who wish to be involved in staff selection.

- 6.21 It needs to be emphasised that the policy of central office responsibility for the appointment of teachers will be retained, together with protection of the rights of teachers with regard to promotions and opportunities. To provide incentive and to ensure that students are best served a range of promotional opportunities will be created. Promotion will more substantially depend on proven merit and motivation. There will be consultation with teacher organisations on the development of precise principles and their implementation.

6.22 Building

Opportunities for school councils to take initiatives which result in buildings and facilities being in tune with the school curriculum and which will promote community activity and involvement will be progressively expanded.

- 6.23 Schools will continue to exercise their responsibilities with respect to minor works, repairs and maintenance and the development of grounds. In a time of limited funds, changing enrolments, and redundancy and obsolescence of some facilities, continuous review will be undertaken with respect to rationalisation of existing resources. This is an area where co-operative arrangements between schools have considerable potential to make maximum use of expensive plant and facilities. Schools should also have a detailed knowledge of resources and facilities in the community which can be used to

extend those resources directly available to them. School-based responsibility can result in buildings and facilities which better reflect the curriculum and programmes in the school and promote community activity. Initiatives already taken by schools deserve encouragement. Some school councils already have performed effectively as the contracting bodies for total school construction, and some have co-ordinated the addition of special purpose complexes to existing schools. These initiatives have resulted in facilities that have met the needs of both schools and communities. Apart from the overall economic advantage of making joint use of jointly-funded facilities, this exercise in co-operation has enhanced community involvement and participation in schools and in school programmes.

- 6.24 The Government will continue to encourage inter-agency co-operation with local government and community-based organisations in the provision of jointly-funded projects. Over recent years amendments to both the Education Act and the Local Government Act have enabled schools and municipal councils to work together more closely in providing a better range of facilities to serve both schools and local communities with less duplication of effort, and councils have used these processes well. The Government will continue to play its part in fostering these developments and in providing help. School-based projects will be developed in consultation with regional offices. In some communities, particularly in rural areas and among less privileged groups, the school has become the major community facility and a source of pride and identification for local residents.
- 6.25 The regional priority review system will continue to be used through the regional education councils for recommending priorities on major capital works. There will be greater emphasis on the co-ordinating role of regional offices than at present. Policies will be progressively implemented to enable the regional offices

to assist rational deployment of physical resources. The region will also play a role in encouraging joint ventures and will support individual schools in their movement towards achieving responsibility at local level.

- 6.26 The central office will be responsible to report upon the sufficiency of the State's school facilities, and to prepare submissions for funds. It will be responsible for allocating funds to the regions and for monitoring programmes of work and cash flow. The central office will also develop standards, ensure an equitable distribution of resources across the State, and publish the necessary guidelines and procedures to ensure effective and proper management and control of programmes of work. The central office will take responsibility for forward planning and be expected to undertake innovative approaches to the design of new facilities. It will also arrange for the purchase and, where necessary, the disposal of sites in consultation with the regions. Safety and security measures will also be a responsibility of central office.

6.27 Administration and Finance

Little was said in the submissions regarding the present Administrative Services Division of the Department, which will now be absorbed into the new Administration and Finance Division. The main criticism, however, was of delays in decision-making and in dealing with correspondence. The reorganisation of these areas will involve a complete reappraisal of administrative practices and management techniques in the day to day running of the Department. Long term administrative strategy will of course be the responsibility of the corporate management group.

- 6.28 The central office of the Education Department will be responsible for overall allocation, administration and accountability of all Government education funding. Regional offices will be responsible

for local management of all funds except those which are to be handled more efficiently on a State-wide basis from central office.

- 6.29 The Government will work towards a programme of triennial budgeting for education, with an annual review designed to accommodate State Budget requirements.
- 6.30 Some schools already prepare annual budget submissions outlining their financial requirements. All will be encouraged to do so to assist processes which will be developed whereby each school's individual needs will be taken into account in determining its allocation of Government funds.
- 6.31 The Education Department will develop a programme of in-service training on administrative and financial responsibilities for principals, school councillors and ancillary staff.
- 6.32 A unit for the support of school councils will be developed after consultation with the School Councils Consultative Group. Its role will include the production of procedure manuals and policy guidelines, liaison with parents, councils and community groups and consultancy services.
- 6.33 The Government will realistically review the provision and conditions of ancillary staff in the light of the new organisational arrangements.
- 6.34 In the continuing development of the education finance system, incentives will be made available to encourage more efficient and economic use of resources particularly to enable school councils to share in savings which may be able to be made as a result of their actions in identifying areas where resources may be better used.
- 6.35 The Government will provide increased opportunities for school councils to enter into a participative planning approach with

regional and central offices so that they may exercise greater influence on those decisions affecting the management of available resources.

6.36 Policy and Planning

The Education Department will identify mechanisms for more effective consultation among the school and its local community, the regional office and the central office. If schools are to accept increased responsibilities in policy development and planning, such mechanisms are essential.

6.37 The Government is committed to establishing accountability between the school, the region, the Education Department and ultimately the Parliament. Together with the process of school reviews, mechanisms will be required to ensure periodic evaluation of State-wide programmes and services, and regular reviews of the efficiency of organisational arrangements and administrative units at all levels.

6.38 The role of the ministers, the corporate management group and the central office of the Education Department will be to determine and review policy, assess educational priorities for the State, and ensure effective implementation and co-ordination. The Education Department will liaise closely with regional authorities and other Government departments and agencies.

6.39 As a result of the increased emphasis placed on central office staff in leading, organizing, liaising and co-ordinating broad strategies in policy formulation, the Government recognises the need for training in educational administration and policy analysis. This may include courses run by the Institute of Educational Administration and (especially for senior officers) short intensive courses offered by tertiary institutions and other bodies.

7.0 IMPLEMENTATION

- 7.1 The planned changes outlined in this Paper build upon the developments in education and changes in attitudes that have occurred in Victoria since the early 1970s. Their aim is to improve the quality of educational services, and so enrich the lives of individuals and the Victorian community as a whole. There are many developments identified in submissions to the Review which would ideally be desirable in all schools, as resources permit.
- 7.2 The Government will immediately establish an Implementation Task Force to prepare for the implementation of the strategies and structures outlined in the Paper. The Task Force will include specialist staff from the Education Department and staff seconded from the Public Service Board, and will be responsible to a top-level steering committee.
- 7.3 The approach to implementation will be sensitive and will recognise that change which is achieved gradually is likely to be the most acceptable. On the other hand, it is an axiom that the longer it takes to institutionalise proposed change, the greater is the uncertainty and frustration that accompanies the operation and the resistance which develops. Gradualism thus will be the keynote with regard to changes in educational practice, but not necessarily in matters relating to administrative structures.
- 7.4 Wherever practicable the consultative process will be used to determine the detail of new arrangements as they affect school councils, principals, teachers and the staff in regional and central offices.
- 7.5 In seeking to further decentralise the administration of education, this Paper follows policies consistently developed in recent years which have encouraged local and regional participation in decision-

making, been adapted to varied conditions throughout the State and provided a basis for a more dynamic contribution to community development.

- 7.6 In our 2,161 schools there are diverse needs, strengths and local resources. The policy directions outlined in this Paper will make it possible to cater more adequately for diversity. However, it is of the utmost importance to note that the new policy initiatives must not become enshrined in an inflexible and unresponsive school system. The organisational principles consistently underlying this Paper will enable the structural development of the Education Department and its schools to be carried out in such a way as to ensure its constant capacity to remain adaptable and responsive to changing and future needs.
- 7.7 Consideration will be given to the extent to which schools are ready for change. Some will wish to respond immediately to the challenges outlined in this Paper. Others will express a preference to observe how new roles and relationships develop before taking up the challenges themselves.
- 7.8 The Government is mindful of the considerable time and thought which have been involved in the preparation of the many submissions from schools, communities and individuals. These submissions have identified the problems of individual schools and have pointed up the needs for support and reform. The Government will therefore implement the policy directions identified in the Paper and seek to deal sensitively with the natural resistance to change which must inevitably be expected. It will also encourage school councils, communities, teachers, principals and parents to co-operate in developing a school system for the 1980s which will maximise the educational opportunities available to the children of this State.

8.0 CONCLUSION

8.1 The announcements regarding the Ministerial Review of Education in Victoria, specified three stages - a Statement of Aims and Objectives of Education in Victoria, a Green Paper identifying some options for further study and consideration, and a White Paper outlining Strategies and Structures for the Achievement of the Aims and Objectives. This Paper represents the culmination of the third stage of the Review.

8.2 The Paper does not, however, represent the end of the consultative process. The Government is gratified by the interest engendered by the Review and believes that the submissions and comments contributed greatly to the making of its decisions. Education will be best served by maintaining this interest and by community commitment. Thus, the White Paper represents a new beginning rather than an end of the process of consultation.

9.0 SUMMARY OF MAJOR INITIATIVES

9.1 The administration of the Education Department will be reorganised at central office, regional and school levels to achieve increased devolution of power and responsibility to local and regional units; greater participation by parents, community members, teachers and principals in education governance; improved consultation; greater economy and efficiency in management; more effective co-ordination of functions and policies; and appropriate mechanisms for internal and external reviews of schools. Roles and responsibilities at each of the three levels will be reallocated so that decisions will be made at the most appropriate level and schools will better meet the needs of students at the local level, but in the context of policies affecting students generally and the system as a whole.

- 9.2 Schools will be encouraged to take greater responsibilities in developing educational policies and curriculum, in establishing bases for forward planning and consulting with parents and communities, and in publishing and explaining details of school policy and instructional programmes.
- 9.3 In consultation and agreement with the school council, the principal will prepare a school policy and in consultation with the teaching staff arrange for the development of school programmes. Core curriculum, however, will be developed within a system of State-wide guidelines. Principals will have the opportunity to participate in the selection of teaching staff.
- 9.4 The Government will continue to develop the role of school councils in policy formulation and implementation and will ensure that no group is in a position to dominate the composition of school councils. School councils may elect to be involved in the appointment of principals and deputy principals, and opportunities will be expanded for them to take initiatives which result in buildings and facilities being in tune with school curriculum and local needs. They will continue to exercise responsibilities with regard to minor works, repairs, maintenance and the development of grounds.
- 9.5 School councils and principals will together develop school policy statements, and these together with details of school programmes will be made available to parents. Evaluation will be carried out on a continuous basis by staff under the leadership of the principal, with reports being made available to school councils and regional officers. This evaluation will be supplemented by school reviews, involving external personnel and conducted at specified intervals or earlier where it appears desirable. De-zoning experiments will be undertaken on a strictly limited and controlled, and properly monitored trial basis. Cluster developments will be encouraged.

- 9.6 The role of regional offices will be expanded in providing services to schools, in contributing to policy formulation at the central level, in co-ordinating activities and undertaking planning, in becoming a focus for accountability within the region, and in serving as a direct link from school to central office and the Ministers. Regional offices will assume many functions which currently are the responsibility of the central office, while re-organisation of central office administration on functional lines will enhance their authority.
- 9.7 Regional education councils will be established in each region to advise and support the regional director. The composition of each council will take account of the particular characteristics of the region.
- 9.8 In the curriculum area, regional offices will provide and co-ordinate support services to schools, especially with regard to curriculum consultancy, curriculum materials development, in-service activities and specialist services. With regard to personnel matters, they will take major responsibility for the employment and allocation of emergency and relieving teachers, and the control and deployment of Senior Educational Officers. In the building area, they will make recommendations on priorities for major works and exercise a broad co-ordinating role. With regard to administration and finance, regional offices will be responsible for the local management of all funds (except those which for reasons of efficiency must be handled on a State-wide basis), provide specialised advisory services to schools, and monitor school financial needs and expenditures.
- 9.9 At central office level, a corporate management group will be formed, comprising the Minister of Education, the Assistant Minister, the Director-General of Education, the Deputy Director-General and the four Executive Directors. A Policy and Planning Unit will be established to service the needs of this group, the Ministers and senior officers of the Department.

- 9.10 A Victorian Education Council will be established to provide advice on a regular basis to both the Ministers and the Director-General of Education.
- 9.11 The current responsibilities of the Divisions of Primary, Secondary, and Technical Education, Teacher Education and Administrative Services will be distributed between the four new functional Divisions and Regional Offices. Each functional division will be headed by an Executive Director.
- 9.12 The Government accepts that the Education Department should be the employer of members of the teaching service. The Teachers' Tribunal should be remodelled, placing increased emphasis upon negotiation and conciliation prior to any formal arbitration.
- 9.13 The aims of education will be pursued in all schools through the development of a core curriculum for students generally, with provision for individual schools to pursue locally based components. Core curriculum is 'that set of basic and essential learnings and experiences which can be expected of all students who pass through our schools'. Through broad-based consultation, a State-wide core curriculum framework will be established, setting out guidelines and fundamental learnings for students at different stages. With the help and support of central and regional offices, it will be the responsibility of each school to translate core curriculum into teaching programmes.
- 9.14 With regard to personnel other than ancillary staff, all appointments will continue to be centrally made. However, school councils will have the opportunity to interview and comment on applicants for the positions of principal and vice-principal. Principals will have the opportunity to influence the selection of individual teachers.

- 9.15 To provide incentive and to ensure that students are best served a range of new promotional opportunities will be created. Promotion will more substantially depend on proven merit and motivation.

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